

ITINERARY

THURSDAY 13TH JULY

DAY ONE

GROUP ARRIVES EDINBURGH AIRPORT

DEPARTING FROM THE ARRIVALS LOUNGE WALK TO THE BUS WAITING CLOSE BY.

JOURNEY INTO EDINBURGH TO ARRIVE AT THE APEX CITY OF EDINBURGH HOTEL
UNLOAD LUGGAGE AND CHECK IN AT THIS TIME
APEX CITY OF EDINBURGH HOTEL, 4 STAR ALL EN SUITE ROOMS WITH COLOUR TV, TEA/
COFFEE MAKING FACILITIES & COMPLIMENTARY WI-FI
SITUATED IN CENTRAL EDINBURGH JUST A FEW MINUTES WALK FROM THE ROYAL MILE,
ST GILES CATHEDRAL AND EDINBURGH CASTLE

EDINBURGH

THE CAPITAL CITY OF SCOTLAND, THE ORIGINS OF EDINBURGH ARE OBSCURE. THERE IS EVIDENCE OF IRON AGE SETTLEMENTS ON AND AROUND ARTHUR'S SEAT. EVIDENCE IS ALSO AVAILABLE THAT THE CASTLE ROCK WAS A PICTISH STRONGHOLD AS EARLY AS THE 5th CENTURY AD. ALTHOUGH, EDINBURGH DID NOT BECOME THE CAPITAL OF SCOTLAND UNTIL WELL INTO THE 12th CENTURY. THE HISTORY OF THIS FINE CITY IS REALLY MOULDED AROUND ONE STREET, THE ROYAL MILE. AT ITS FOOT LIES HOLYROOD HOUSE, STILL A ROYAL PALACE TODAY, WHERE MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS LIVED AND WHERE BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE HAD THE BRIEF TRIUMPH OF HIS CELEBRATION BALL AFTER CAPTURING EDINBURGH IN THE 1745 REBELLION IN HIS ATTEMPT TO PUT THE STUARTS BACK ON THE THRONE. AT ITS HEAD THE CASTLE TOWERS ON ITS GREAT ROCK, MAJESTIC IN ITS SPLENDOUR AND DOMINANT IN ITS ARCHITECTURE. THE CASTLE HILL IS 443ft ABOVE SEA LEVEL AND LIKE ARTHUR'S SEAT, OF VOLCANIC ORIGIN. BETWEEN THE TWO, THE ROYAL MILE WINDS ITS WAY ALONG THE SPINE OF ROCK THAT IS PRE 18th CENTURY EDINBURGH. TALL, MANY STOREYED HOUSES CLING TO THE STEEP HILLSIDES.

YET, EDINBURGH IS NOT JUST ABOUT HISTORY, THE NEW TOWN IS JUST AS PICTURESQUE WITH WIDE STREETS AND CRESCENTS. WITH PRINCES' STREET FLANKED BY GARDENS ON THE SOUTH BEING DESCRIBED BY MANY AS ONE OF EUROPE'S FINEST THOROUGHFARES. EVERYONE IS SURE TO ENJOY EDINBURGH'S SHOPS.

EDINBURGH CASTLE

THE OLDEST PART OF THE CASTLE IS ST MARGARET'S CHAPEL, BUILT EARLY IN THE 12th CENTURY. APART FROM THIS WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE EARLY BUILDINGS ON THE SITE. WE DO KNOW THAT THE CASTLE WALLS BEGAN TO TAKE THEIR PRESENT FORM FROM ABOUT 1356. SINCE THEN, MANY ADDITIONS AND CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE.

TIME TO SETTLE IN BEFORE TAKING A WANDER IN THE AREA

LUNCH AND EVENING MEAL OWN ARRANGEMENTS

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FRIDAY 14TH JULY

DAY TWO

BREAKFAST SERVICE STARTS AT AT 7:00am IN THE HOTEL RESTAURANT

TODAY IS A MOVE DAY,

PLEASE BRING LUGGAGE TO THE COACH TO LOAD AT 7:50am
READY TO DEPART THE HOTEL AT 8:00am.

FOLLOWING THE ROAD PASSED STIRLING THEN ON THE CALLANDER BEFORE ENTERING
GLEN OGLE AND GLEN DOCHART. TURNING ON TO THE A82 TO GLEN LOCHY.

FOLLOWING THE TWISTING ROAD. ROUND LOCH AWE ON YOUR LEFT,
TURNING UP THE PASS OF BRANDER AS THE ROAD RUNS PARALLEL TO THE RIVER AWE.

ONWARD WITH LOCH ETIVE TO THE RIGHT
OPENING INTO THE SEA AND THE FIRTH OF LORNE

TO ARRIVE OBAN AT APPROX. 11:30am AT THE CALLIDONIAN McBRIDE FERRY TERMINAL.

SITUATED ON THE FIRTH, BOATS LEAVE HERE CONNECTING A NUMBER OF ISLANDS TO
THE MAINLAND

OBAN

OBAN ENJOYS A SUPERB SETTING SITTING AT THE END OF A BAY SHELTERED BY
THE ISLAND OF KERRERA. A NATURAL HARBOUR, TODAY OBAN IS A TOWN OF
SOME 8,000 PEOPLE BUT JUST 130 YEARS AGO IT WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A
VILLAGE, THEN CAME THE RAILWAYS. TOURISTS AS WELL AS RICH BUSINESSMEN
FROM GLASGOW FLOCKED IN, BUILDING GREAT VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN
VILLAS AS LOCAL PEOPLE BEGAN TO CATER TO THIS INFLUX.

TODAY IT IS THE GATEWAY TO THE WESTERN ISLES WITH LOCAL FERRIES PLYING
THEIR TRADE TO SUCH WONDERFUL SOUNDING PLACES; LISMORE, COLONSAY,
BARRA, SOUTH UIST AND OF COURSE MULL.

THE TOWN HAS TWO CATHEDRALS; THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL OF ST
COLUMBA, A 20th CENTURY GRANITE BUILDING, AND THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF
ST JOHN THE DIVINE, BUILT IN THE 19th CENTURY. HOWEVER, THE TOWN IS
DOMINATED BY McCAIG'S TOWER, A VAST COLOSSEUM OF A BUILDING STARTED IN
1897 BY OBAN BANKER JOHN STUART McCAIG. McCAIG WANTED TO ESTABLISH A
MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY BUT HE DIED BEFORE COMPLETION. TODAY IT
STANDS EMPTY EXCEPT FOR A GARDEN BUT DOES PROVIDE A WONDERFUL
SEAWARD PANORAMA ESPECIALLY AT SUNSET. ANYONE FANCYING A WALK
COULD CLIMB UP IN ABOUT TEN MINUTES, BUT IT IS A VERY STEEP WALK.
IF YOU FANCY A WEE DRAM (Shot of Whiskey), THEN DO TAKE A TOUR OF THE
OBAN DISTILLERY IN THE CENTRE OF THE TOWN IN GEORGE STREET.

COLLECT LUGGAGE FROM THE COACH AND ENTER THE FERRY BUILDING

YOU ARE BOOKED AS WALK ON PASSENGERS ON THE 12:20 SAILING
OBAN TO ISLE OF MULL

NICE CROSSING THROUGH THE BAY TO ARRIVE CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL
AT APPROX 1:10pm

ISLAND of MULL

THE WETTEST OF THE HEBRIDES ISLANDS, GIVES THE NATURAL MORELAND OF
HEATHER AN ALMOST BLEAK AND UNWELCOMING FEEL ON A GREY DAY.

SEEN ON A CLEAR DAY, THE ISLAND IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF THE
INNER HEBRIDES ISLANDS AND CERTAINLY THE LARGEST. IT IS ALSO EASY TO
REACH FROM OBAN, JUST A FERRY CROSSING OF 45MINUTES.

MULL TAKEN FROM THE GAELIC WORD "MEALL" IT WAS CERTAINLY KNOWN TO THE ROMANS AND EVEN PTOLEMY CALLED IT THE ISLAND OF MALEUS. BEN MORE IS THE TALLEST MOUNTAIN ON THE ISLAND AT 3,140ft AND THE FAMOUS DUART CASTLE IS THE ANCESTRAL HOME OF THE CLAN CHIEF OF THE McCLEANS.

THE OTHER CASTLE IS TOROSAY IN THE VILLAGE OF CRIAGNURE AND IS OWNED BY THE LOCAL FAMILY THE GUTHRIES. THERE IS A CONNECTION HERE BETWEEN PETER BALDWIN (CHARTER TRAVEL) AND THE GUTHRIE FAMILY. WHEN PETER BOUGHT HIS HOUSE IN CHELTENHAM NEARLY 45 YEARS AGO HE BOUGHT IT FROM MRS JOYCE GUTHRIE AND THE HOUSE NAME WAS AND STILL IS CRAIGIE. JOYCE MARRIED ONE OF THE YOUNGEST SONS OF THE GUTHRIE FAMILY AND OF COURSE NAMED HER HOUSE AFTER THE FAMILY ESTATE IN SCOTLAND

THE POPULATION OF THE ISLAND WHICH ONCE APPROACHED NEARLY 10,000 PEOPLE DECLINED RAPIDLY IN THE LATE 19th CENTURY DUE TO THE CLEARANCES AND THE POTATO FAMINE OF 1846. THANKFULLY, THIS DECLINE HAS HALTED AND DUE TO A RISE OF INBOUND SETTLERS FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, MULL NOW APPROACHES OVER 2,500. THIS STARTLING REVERSAL HAS BEEN BOUGHT ABOUT MAINLY BY THE INCREASE IN TOURISM WITH OVER HALF A MILLION VISITORS COMING TO THE ISLAND EACH YEAR.

TOBERMORY IS THE MAIN TOWN SITUATED ON THE NORTHERN TIP OF THE ISLAND WITH A POPULATION OF APROX 800 AND EASILY ONE OF THE MOST ATTRACTIVE FISHING PORTS ON THE SCOTTISH WEST COAST.

TWO OTHER INTERESTING POINTS OF INTEREST IN THE AREA;

CALGARY (like in Canada): IT IS SAID A ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICEMAN VISITED THE AREA IN 1883 AND WAS SO IMPRESSED WITH THE BEAUTY AROUND HIM HE WENT HOME AND NAMED A CANADIAN CITY AFTER THE VILLAGE.

CLOSE TO THE ISLAND IS A MUCH SMALLER ONE CALLED STAFFA. IT IS HERE A SMALL CAVE IS LOCATED CALLED FINGALS CAVE. THIS PLACE SO INSPIRED THE COMPOSER FELIX MENDELSSOHN HE WROTE A FAMOUS PIECE OF MUSIC OF THE SAME NAME.

ISLAND COACH ARRANGED TO COLLECT YOU FROM THE FERRY TERMINAL AT 1:15pm

START THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE ISLAND
LEAVE CIVILIZATION BEHIND AS WE KNOW IT, NO LARGE TOWNS HERE
IN FACT, NOTHING BUT 36 MILES OF TRANQUILLITY, NO GAS STATIONS EITHER, NO
PIZZA PLACES OR BIG MACS

THE JOURNEY WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH GLEN MORE, THEN ALONG THE SHORES
OF LOCH SCRIDAIN TO ARRIVE AT THE SMALL HAMLET OF FIONNPHORT ON THE
SHORES OF THE SOUND OF IONA AT APPROX 2:30pm

UNLOAD THE COACH IN THE CAR PARK, WALK DOWN TO THE JETTY TO CATCH THE
WALK ON FERRY OVER TO THE ISLAND ITSELF

JUST A SHORT PASSAGE OVER TO THE ISLAND TO ARRIVE AT APPROX 3:00pm

WALK FROM THE FERRY TERMINAL THE SHORT DISTANCE TO THE ST COLUMBA
HOTEL TO ARRIVE AT APPROX 3:30pm

IONA

SITUATED LESS THAN A MILE OFF THE SOUTHWEST TIP OF MULL IS AN ISLAND APROX 3 MILES IN LENGTH AND APROX 1 MILE IN WIDTH AT ITS WIDEST POINT NAMED IONA. IT HAS BEEN A PLACE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP FOR MAYBE 1400 YEARS AND A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE FOR CENTURIES DUE TO THE ASSOCIATION OF THE ISLE WITH ST COLUMBA.

IONA`S OLDEST REMAINING BUILDING IS ST ORANS CHAPEL WHICH LIES AT THE VERY CENTRE OF IONA`S SACRED BURIAL GROUND. A CEMETERY SAID TO CONTAIN THE REMAINS OF OVER 60 KINGS OF NORWAY, IRELAND, AND SCOTLAND, INCLUDING DUNCAN AND MACBETH.

ST COLUMBA ARRIVED IN IONA DURING THE YEAR 563 WITH 12 LOYAL MONKS AFTER BEING EXILED FROM IRELAND. HE DIED IN 597 AND HISTORY BOOKS TELL US VERY LITTLE ABOUT HIS LIFE EXCEPT HE BECAME A CULT FIGURE.

IN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURIES IONA BECAME A PLACE OF IMPORTANCE, ESTABLISHING A SPECIFICALLY CELTIC CHRISTIAN TRADITION. FROM HERE MISSIONARIES WERE SENT OUT TO MANY PARTS OF SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN ENGLAND WITH IONA BECOMING A VERY RESPECTED SEAT OF LEARNING AND ARTISTRY. THE FAMOUS BOOK OF KELLS (ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT NOW KEPT IN TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN) WAS PRODUCED HERE. SO WHAT CAUSED THE DEMISE OF THIS ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY OF CELTIC CHRISTIANITY?

THREE MAJOR THEORIES CONCLUDE TO OFFER THE FOLLOWING REASONS: A SERIES OF VIKING RAIDS CULMINATING IN THE MASSACRE OF 68 MONKS ON THE SANDS OF MARTYRS BAY IN 806

PRESSURE FROM THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH BEGINNING WITH THE SYNOD OF WHITBY IN 664 WHICH CHOSE ROME OVER THE CELTIC CHURCH, OR SUPPRESSION OF THE CELTIC CHURCH BY KING DAVID IN 1144.

IN 1203 IONA BECAME A PART OF THE MAINSTREAM CHURCH AND BOTH AN AUGUSTINIAN NUNNERY AND A BENEDICTINE MONASTERY WERE FOUNDED HERE. DURING THE REFORMATION THE ENTIRE COMPLEX WAS RANSACKED. THEN IN 1899 THE OWNER OF THE ISLAND, THE 8TH DUKE OF ARGYLL, DONATED THE ABBEY AND BUILDINGS TO THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THE MODERN RESURGENCE BEGAN IN 1938 UNDER GEORGE McLEOD, A MINISTER FROM GLASGOW WHO ESTABLISHED A NEW COMMUNITY ON THE ISLAND. THIS HAS GROWN TO BE A MIXED COMMUNITY RETREAT WITH THE ENTIRE ABBEY COMPLEX NOW LOOKED AFTER AND ADMINISTERED BY HISTORIC SCOTLAND. THE ISLAND ITSELF EXCEPT FOR THE CHURCH BUILDINGS IS LOOKED AFTER BY THE NATIONAL TRUST OF SCOTLAND. A SPECIAL PLACE OF TRANQUILITY AND PEACE.

NICE COMFORTABLE HOTEL WITH ALL EN SUITE ROOMS
BREAKFAST & EVENING MEALS ARE ARRANGED

TIME FOR YOU ALL TO ENJOY YOUR TIME ON THE ISLAND

EVENING MEAL AT THE HOTEL AT 6:00pm

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SATURDAY 15th JULY

DAY THREE

BREAKFAST SERVICE STARTS AT 8:00am IN THE HOTEL RESTAURANT

TIME ON THE ISLAND - OWN ACTIVITIES

LUNCH OWN ARRANGEMENTS

EVENING MEAL AT THE HOTEL AT 6:00pm

SUNDAY 16st JULY

DAY FOUR

BREAKFAST SERVICE STARTS AT 8:00am IN THE HOTEL RESTAURANT

TIME ON THE ISLAND - OWN ACTIVITIES

LUNCH OWN ARRANGEMENTS

EVENING MEAL AT THE HOTEL AT 6:00pm

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MONDAY 17TH JULY

DAY FIVE

BREAKFAST SERVICE STARTS AT 8:00am IN THE HOTEL RESTAURANT

TODAY IS A MOVE DAY,

PLEASE HAVE YOUR LUGGAGE READY TO DEPART THE HOTEL AT 9:35am.
WALK DOWN TO THE FERRY STAGING AREA TO CATCH YOUR FERRY AT 10:10am
SHOULD GET YOU BACK TO FIONNPHORT BY 10:20am
DISEMBARK AND WALK TO THE COACH PARK
YOUR ISLAND COACH WILL BE WAITING IN THE FIONNPHORT COACH PARK FROM 10:15am.
READY TO LOAD

DEPART FIONNPHORT AT APPROX 10:20am
RETURN JOURNEY ACROSS MULL TO CRAIGNURE TO ARRIVE APPROX 1:40PM
THE FERRY SHOULD ARRIVE AT APPROX 1:40PM
WALK ON BOARD WITH YOUR LUGGAGE THE FERRY WILL BE READY TO SET SAIL TO OBAN
AT 2:15PM

ARRIVE OBAN AT APPROX 1:40pm
AS FOOT PASSENGERS YOU MUST DISEMBARK WALK THROUGH THE FERRY TERMINAL TO
FIND YOUR COACH –**EDINBURGH COACH LINES**

READY TO LEAVE FOR THE JOURNEY TO EDINBURGH AT APPROX 2:15pm
FACILITY STOPS ALONG THE WAY
TO ARRIVE EDINBURGH AT APPROX 6:00pm.
UNLOAD AND BOOK IN FOR A RETURN VISIT TO THE APEX CITY OF EDINBURGH HOTEL FOR
A FURTHER 8 NIGHT STAY

EVENING MEAL OWN ARRANGEMENTS

END OF FIRST STAGE OF THE TRIP

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